

Halo After the War

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Summary: This story follows Arrows, after the war. He assigned to house a Covenant Elite, an unlikely pair. It follows their... unsteady friendship. Trying to get along as best they could admits the scars of war...

1. Chapter 1

This story is about Steven Arrows, after the ceasefire between the Covenant forces and the Earth. Both sides leaving the war, brutally scared, and as the alliance threatens to break, and another tide of total war threatens to start. Admits this turmoil, Arrows is asked to house a Covenant Elite, an enemy. Coming from the war, depressed, and unmotivated, all Arrows has left is his love of football

2. End of one story, beginning of another

Halo After the War

Peace has come to the broken Nations. The scars that have been inflicted would not heal, but the goal was to prevent anymore from happening.

The year is 2258, 3 months after the war ended, and both sides are trying to do whatever they could to keep the peace, and tame the riots on their planets. One idea was presented from the UN, to transfer population, humans to the Covenant world, and Covenant to the human world. With nothing to lose, and much to gain, both sides half heartedly agreed, having no idea what their actions will lead to.

My name is Steven Arrows, I served in combat for three years, as a Marine, joining illegally at the age of 16, and I felt a strong patriotic feeling to help the earth in its struggle. But the war is over now, and I, having skipped collage, was sent back under high honors from Fleet commander Harper to a collage in New York. I was to

spend two years there, and have help from the government to find a job, but I already knew what I was going to be, a football player. I had a love for the game from day one, playing for hours daily, practicing constantly. I also had an amazing shot, people suggested I become a sharpshooter, but I wasn't interested in that profession. I entered the war, a happy, cheerful person, I exited, a depressed, unmotivated man with nothing to live for. With no family, and most of his friends dead during the bloody war, I didn't care what happened to me; at least, that was what I thought.

The transport touched down, I lifted my hand above my eyes to cover them from the smoke and dust. Me and about a dozen more marines had exited the transport, and into a dirty, and very unstable landing area. The lights from the city in the distance.

"Kinda reminds me of Washington." A soldier said, clearly bored. Who wasn't? We were all waiting for news of our visas being accepted, and the cold day was made worse with the minor drizzle, wetting our close. The site of the once glorious city was madding, and how the government authorized the importation of Covenant civilians and soldiers, the people who started this all.

"Gentlemen!" A Sgt. yelled, drowning out all over sounds, a marine with an umbrella walking at the same pace as he was, covering the Sgt., "You have served the military for many years, and we thank you!" He patriotically yelled, his voice, the sound of a bomb exploding, he was pacing back and forth, looking at the ground, "We will do our best to repay you, beside your huge payroll." The Sgt. Joked, knowing we only get paid 5000\$ a month. "You're going to collage lads!" He informed, his words met with negative sounds and grunts, even though they already knew, I just stood still. "And for you who are tight on cash, I need one volunteer to step up to house an Elite." He said, the look on his eye, signaling that he wasn't joking. It was met with stunned silence and coughing, but I really didn't care, I stood at attention., unwavering.

"Anyone? No? Well then, now it gets interesting for one of you." He said, looking along our ranks to pick a victim, "Well, Arrows, you look interesting, your hired, you get paid an extra 10,000\$. Congratulations." He said a look of mischief in his brown eyes. Sinkers and sighs of relief filled our tired lines, as the threat passed over everyone, except me. We were led into a raggedy old airport with only marines standing at attention along the walls of the corridor, the city lights gleaming through the window. We walked for a minute or so until we came upon visa station, with a lady and two marines standing behind the counter. I stood in line recounting the memories of my army life, and the two brothers I had to leave behindâ€¦ I heard they both were KIA. Both on the same dayâ€¦ on my birthday.

Flash backâ€¦

"Well Private Arrows! Happy 17th birthday! I'm surprised you survived this far!" My hearty Sgt. Yelled, slapping me on the back.

"Yeah. Glad to have you with us this long!" another voice rang.

"Let's hope you have another!"

"Thanks guys." I said, looking around the dirty, cramped room at all the cheerful faces surrounding me.

"Well, it wouldn't be a birthday without a giftâ€¦ here." My Sgt. Half whispered as he handed me a box of chocolates.

"Thank you sir!" I happily said, my words drowned out by distant explosion, and close bursts of machine gun fire. I heartily took the box, anticipating the pleasure so many take for granite. Dust and debris fell from the ceiling as the distance explosions causing our unsteady dorm to shake.

"Arrows! Arrows!" a breathless messenger burst through the door, the rain flying in the room.

"Shut the damn door man!" shouted a man in the dorm.

"Private, Private. Calm down, catch your breath." Our Sgt. Said.

"Yes sirâ€¦ sorry sir." The messenger gasped for breath, finding them hard to come.

"Arrows, your brothersâ€¦ both of themâ€¦ dead, bothâ€¦ sorry sir." The messenger said, looking at the ground.

My world just crumbled around me that dayâ€¦ I joined the army because of them, and their encouragement helped me go on. I looked at the ceiling with unseeing eyes, my mouth failed to say words, my knees trembled.

"They were together, in the trench, a bomb killed them with two others-."

"MARINE!" The Sgt. Shouted at the messenger, wanting to sooth my grief.

"Sorry sirâ€¦ but they found a letter on one."

The messenger shyly handed me the dirty note, which was dotted with blood.

I opened it up it readâ€¦

Dear little bro,

Happy illegal 17th! We all hope you will have many more! It is hell up here in central command, were supposedly surrounded and they get closer every day. I'll keep my promise those, me and your other bro will stay alive and have that welcome home party we've been talking aboutâ€¦

The rest of the letter was blown off; he was righting it when he died. I didn't know how to react.

End of flash backâ€¦

"Nextâ€¦ Next. Next?" the accounting lady said, slowly bringing me back to reality.

"Marine! Next." An impatient marine behind me said.

I walked up, not regarding the complaint behind me, lost in my thoughts.

I sat down, setting my gear next to me and waiting for the paperwork.

"Welcome home sir." The accounting said looking me in the eye.

"Thank you." I said, looking back.

"Your visa is goodâ€¦ and you're the one housing the Elite right?" she asked.

"Yes mam, how long does he stayâ€¦ and when does he come." I asked.

"He stays with you for about aâ€¦ 3 months, and he arrives in two days." She said, satisfying my questions.

"Here you go sir, you'll start school in a week, along with the Elite, and it is a cross national, other Covenant pop. Will be there." She said, looking at the papers on her desk.

"Thank you." I said, taking the papers and my gear, walking to the waiting line of marines.

3. The memories remain

I took my position behind 7 other marines, waiting my turn to get the hell out. My head swam at the thoughts of my brothers, and that all they mean to the world is two little numbers added to the total dead. That's all it means to people, two numbers, and if I died? One more number on the total dead, no name, no burial place. In war, you only remember the heroes.

_15 minutes later, on the bus to the hotel. _

The bus jumped at each small crack we hit on the long way to New York. I was sitting alone in the back in the almost empty bus. Two marines sitting in front of me talking about them in impossible odds, with no hope, but somehow winning. I silently stared at the many buildings destroyed by the pointless war, the workers desperately working through the rain to get the buildings up.

Flash backâ€¦

The sounds of close explosions were mixed with the warthogs and gun fire.

"All rightâ€¦ easy â€¦" a noncom said, approaching our lead vehicle eyes on a piece of paper

"All three vehicles right here sir." Our captain said, taking the smoke out of his mouth.

"Scout the villages about three clicks from here, good luck

Sgt."

"Finally, an easy job, get your asses ready marines! And prepare to spread the love of god." He said, answered by hurrahs.

I was support; I sat next to the driver, giving directions and tactical data. We were in Northern Europe uhâ€| Poland I think.

The day was marvelous, the sun shining on our dirty uniforms, overworked and battered. My comrades and me were set up to do a recon mission, and give reports of the disappearance of squad green six.

"The last transmission wasâ€| "Their blowing us away, their blowing us away, fall back". I relayed to the captain of our group, who just shrugged and gunned it.

"Well the Covenant are about to have the furry of god against them, also now as the UNMS marine core!"

"Hurrah!"

About three minutes latter an old sign appeared.

"Take a left, here." I said, pointing to roads that lead into an abandoned village.

"This looks like my hometown." Our Sgt. Said.

Then, passing the first houses, the whine of ghost was right behind us.

"Well Sgt., our friends our here." I said, giving an unsure smile.

"Shit! Marine, get them of our back!" our Sgt. Said, turning wildly dogging the covenant.

"Command, this is easy, were under attack by multiple covenant forces." I informed, getting my SMG ready.

"Roger recon." The voice crackled back.

Our three warthogs charged through the village, with no room for error.

I started firing short bursts at the oncoming hostiles, careful to save ammo.

"Six ghosts on our tail sir, and one banshee." I said, reloading my rifle, "think we can take them."

Our gunner scored a direct hit on the banshee which went spiraling down onto an old house.

"Keep firing up there! Uh-oh"

"What?" I said, wondering what my captain meant, "Whoa". In front of us was a Covenant blockade, behind us, the pursuers, the only way was a small ally to the right.

"Hold on to your lunch Marines! Here we go!" our captain said, turning hard to the right. I signaled the other warthogs to follow us on our little detour.

"Oh lord up high." Our captain said, noticing the dead end.

"Great diving captain." I said.

"Shut the hell up; get that machine gun out, Martin! Ammo!"

"You got it Sarge!"

"Arrows! Ammo and weapons!"

"Yes sir!"

"Sir Were surrounded!" the frantic soldier said.

"Into that building! Defensive positions now!"

"Oh lord this is the end."

Martin smashed the door open, letting the 9 Marines in the house. We scrambled up the cottage; the lifelessness of the place was starting. The good part, it was a very good defensive position, and we had three MG's, two AT, and a whole lot of ammo.

"Arrows, Kane, Martin, Mg's on the second floor, shoot every sub human bitch that tries to touch our new home."

"The rest of you upstairs, cover the windows or the stairs, Ben, have an AT ready."

"Yes Sgt."

"One word of advice, don't miss."

We ran to our positions, my head throbbing, and setting up our Mg's loading our weapons all at once, rushing to cover

The windows, focusing our sights to the only place they could come.

"This is easy company, we are surrounded, we need reinforcements, air force whatever. Over." Our radio man frantically said over and over into the radio, breaking the silence.

Two doves settled on a nearby rooftop, and crows circled over head, the sun, blocked by the clouds

Then the whistle blew. A hearty war cry from the Covenant erupted as they charged forward, in a straight line.

"Open fire! Fire!"

Our machine guns spat out rounds after round of fire upon the Covenant storm, and

"Die! Die! Die!"

"Nock, nock, the Covenant are home!"

"Shit, there at the door, cover us!"

The Covenant broke through the door, clearing the downstairs first.

"Arrows, blow e'm to hell." Our Sarge said.

I pushed the red button on the detonator, hearing the explosion downstairs, and screams from the Covenant downstairs.

My machine gun was too hot to touch, but I kept firing, sweeping the wave after wave of the enemy.

"How many dead or wounded men!" our Sgt. Asked.

"Johnson is dead, Martian is wounded but still manning his post, and I think Kenny is hit."

"Well, notify your next of kin comrades, but let's make them remember our name."

End of flash backâ€|

A sudden bump woke me from my doze. I regained focus and looked at New York, the place where I hoped to start a new life.

"I hope my family is happy to have me back."

"No one does."

"Aww shut the hell up."

Came chatter from the men in front of me.

We started on the empty bridge, our lights cutting into the light. The old bus silently playing old songs on the radio, men slowly taping to the beat and bobbing their heads.

15 minutes latterâ€|

The bus finally ended its long journey, stopping in the middle of the main part of the city, towering high above us, so far we could not see the top. The darkness lay like a blanket over the cityâ€| but the city is restless, workers were bustling about rebuilding destroyed buildings, working day and night, regardless of weather.

"This is your stop men, the noncom will direct you inside." The driver said, still focused on the TV.

The dozen men in the bus started to pile out to the soft drizzle of the night, no moon shown tonight, but blackness.

"This way, papers in hand, come on."

I readily got my papers out, looking over it and the picture of me, before the whole mess. I looked so happy, cheerful, optimistic, and brave. I shook my head at those years, years of blind partrinisom and

courage. Men falsely led into battle with the idea they would become heroes. People would die, men, friends, brothers, but not them, they would live on and bury the dead, but not die.

"Next comrade, don't hold up the line please." Our noncom said to me, impatient of my delay.

"Ohâ€¦ yeah, sorry sir, my bad sir." I apologized, throwing the papers on his desk.

"Alright, Steven Arrowsâ€¦ waitâ€¦ you're housing the Elite huh? Can't say I envy you. But you do get a bigger room."

"Yes sir."

"3rd floor, second door on the right, here are the keysâ€¦ don't lose it." He finished, waving on the next in line.

I started up the ugly stairs, repeating the directions to myself. Finally getting to the door.

I stopped in front of it.

"Well, this is my new homeâ€¦" I said to myself, finally opening the door. I kept my expectations low, and by-golly, it was lower. The room was small, a dirty bed facing the bed and two other small rooms. The room smelt like urine, and the other room held a bed and a fridge. The last room was a storage room, with a small desk and a single light.

"Well, better then the trenches." I said, throwing my bags to the floor. A note was on the desk, I slowly picked up the paper, blowing off the dust.

"A welcome home party will be tonight. It will be at 1:00 am. Wear what you want."

I thought about it, I was tired, but I wanted to keep my promise to my brothersâ€¦ the only thing I could do for them nowâ€¦

4. New Freinds

Switches to Covenant main battle commandâ€¦

"Are you sure of this general?" the general asked, already knowing the answer.

"Yes my lord, the fleet is gone."

The head general walked back and forth, assessing the damage from his incompetent general.

He walked like a tiger surrounded by hunters, slowly approachingâ€¦ step by step.

"How about the 15th fleet?" he asked, hoping it could avert the danger."

"They wereâ€¦ wiped out during the last battle with the

Heretics."

The head general was displeased, very displeased with his younger. He walked to the monitor, watching videos of the battle that took place.

"We need a veteran, a war hero from the war!" Play tape 32." He instructed. The monitor rumbled, and then played a tape.

"Sir? Are you sure about this?" the general asked with uncertainty.

"Absolutely general, see if we can commission him from earth!" the head general said, pointing at the green demon.

Switches back to Arrows

I wore what I always did, black over coat and a pair of jeans, and a hat over my scruffy black hair. My deep blue eyes shining in the light of the cities lights. The rain increased a bit, and smoke from the sewers rose up into the sky, dancing in the rain. I made my way through the adventurous people walking along the broken sidewalks, riddled with holes and debris.

"Steven! Steven Arrows!" an excited voice behind me called, clearly for me.

"We know each other?" I asked emotionless.

"Yeah! I think I met your father! uh! old what's his face. Sorry, I don't quite recall his name." he bumbled, almost like a madman. He was an African-American. Tall, short black hair and black eyes to match. He had distinctive stride, and an accent, not sure what.

"I'm sorry, I don't have a father." I said plainly, and irritated at this delay.

"Everyone has a father." He said positively, shrugging his shoulders.

"I'm sorry, I have to go to the marine party." I said, turning around and pacing away.

But he was persistent like a tick on a hound, and jogged right up to me.

"I'm going to the same one!"

"Really? What branch?" I asked, not believing him.

"Supply Major Dan Berkman!" He said, saluting.

"Right!" I said slowly, studding him.

"Well, looks like you won't leave me no matter what-."

"Yup."

"- So I have no choose." I finished.

"So tell me about yourself Arrows."

“ At the party”

I learned many things about Dan on the way over. He was 36, despite his looks, married, two kids and three brothers. He was also asked to home stay a Covenant elite, but readily declined the "Generous" offer.

"Well, you know anyone here?" Dan asked me, taking his black overcoat off.

"No." I answered, looking across the club looking building, "I think I'll turn in early."

"Come on, let's get a drink, it's on the house tonight." He said, referring to the Marine core.

We walked through the dance floor, the lights changing colors.

"Ahh! I win again you dogs! Deal another one! Again!" a drunken shout from the bar area erupted; we learned it was an Italian, a heavy drinker. He was playing a card game, probably poker, and winning greatly. He had a great black hat, and an over coat slung over his back, and an unfinished hairdo, with a white, unbuttoned shirt to add. His hazel eyes twinkled at the fortune he was mounting in this simple game. His ragged body swayed proudly to the rhythm of the song, bobbing his head to the beat, and dealing out another hand of cards to the drunken players who didn't know how much they were losing.

"Better not interfere." Dan mumbled to me, afraid of the drunks.

I ignored him and walked to the one of the two, empty, green leather chairs.

"Well my American friend, come here for a challenge?" the Italian asked, with the hint of another pig entering the slaughter house.

"I so love a challenge. I hope you will entertain me" I calmly said, showing no fear.

"And we hope you entertain us." He returned with the same hotness as what exited my mouth, and raised his glass of champagne to the new comer.

"To the American!"

"Don't know what you're self into son, but I'm in, another hand." Dan said, reluctantly sitting on the table aside me, cursing under his breath.

The cards flew for hours, people losing hundreds on a single hand. The game kept playing, cards being passed out again and again, the adrenaline like a drug, we were addicted. But once in awhile, a player would through down his cards, cursing and silently left. This happened for the next hour until there were four players at the circleur table. The green round table had much action tonight, as spectators stopped to observe the card player for a few minutes, but none ever entered. The radio softly playing old songs that fit the

mood exactly. The old chandelier above us, swaying with the slightest movement.

The hand was played again, black jack, but this time the Italian put everything he had.

"Well, entertain me American." He said, finishing his fifth drink.

"Don't worry." I answered, answering by putting all I had in.

"Your courage is my courage kid." Dan said, also throwing his money in the hole.

The fourth man looked in awe and shook his head as the other player's bet all they had.

The Italian looked over the cards, amazed that the American accepted his challenge.

"Well Italian?" I asked patiently, not the slightest note of stress in my voice.

"Yes, yes." He said, waving me off. He finally dealt the cards, clearly having second thoughts about it.

"Two cards per each, one up, one down, the magic number win."

The cards slid perfectly to our hands as we looked silently at our cards, no one dared to say a word.

"Hit or stay American?" the Italian asked me.

"Hit." I said, another card slid my way.

"Hit or stay?" he asked me again.

"Hit"

"Hit or stay?"

"Stay." I said, studding my cards, " yes, stay."

He asked the same question s to Dan, who declared bust after two rounds, and then he dealt his cards.

"Bust, you American?" he asked, swearing at his bad luck.

"Bust." I replied, which was met by silence, and then we all started laughing, somehow finding it hysterical, laughing until our eyes watered.

On The Way to the dorms

"Sorry guys, I got to take this exit." Dan said, shrugging his shoulders and pointing a half destroyed sign.

"Yeah, see you man." I answered.

"Hey Italian. Where do you live?" I asked.

"Dorm 44, you?"

"Dorm 21."

"Then I guess I'll see more of you American."

â€|

At Heretic central commandâ€|

"Are the preparations going to plan, general?" the tall, straight face figure asked, clouded in shadows to the kneeling general.

"Yes high one, the humans are in disarray, half of their world is trying to break."

"And the Covenant?" the straight faced figure asked, his red eyes, gleaming with gay joy.

"They are in chaos. They have not the power to take us, and are trying to hide their weakness from the humans." The general informed, taking comfort that his master was enjoying the news.

"Yes, yes. Have the war effort continue against the Covenant foolsâ€| but leave the humans out for nowâ€| I haveâ€| very special plans for earth, yes." His voice crackled, like a dim fire defiant in the wind.

The kneeling general bowed once more, and walked out the bare, spotless room with only a single lamp by the entrance for furnishing, supplying the only light in the room.

"Yes, yes, there time will comeâ€|" The High one chuckled to himself, and then started to laugh.

5. 56

Sry everyone. I know my chapters have come out latter and latter. I wanted to get this one out as fast as I could, so its naturally rushed. I am open to criticism and all comments, good or bad. And with that, enjoy!

3 days latter...

The sounds of footsteps approached the shaggy old dorm, scarcely furnished and dirty interior. Steven listened to the pair of footsteps, and new one of them was the Elites. He sat, in silent thought in the chair, thinking of what would happen next. But the knock of the door broke his concentration.

"Steven Arrows?" an irritated voice asked, clearly not amused or joking.

"Yes?" I answered with the same note in my voice.

"You're â€| friend is here." My eyebrow rose as I approached the door.

The door creaked as I opened up, reviling a fully dressed military Sgt. And a eight foot tall, white armor, fully armed Covenant Elite. He dwarfed the Sgt, and was looking directly at me, sending a chill down my spine. He pushed me aside and walked in.

"Hey, Sgt. Are all those weapons necessary?" I asked a troubled look on my face.

"Yes, they are a sign of his "authority. He has 56 killsâ€¦ don't become the 57th." He answered, putting a hand on my shoulder, "Go get e'm tiger." He then left me, silently laughing to himself.

"56â€¦ 56â€¦ 56." The number kept running through my head, as I tried to put faces on the marines he killed. And the nagging pain that my brothers could be in that count. I kept my head clear though.

"You hungry?" I asked, walking into the room, trying to make small talk.

"No, I'm quite fine." He said, looking straight at me. He's voice sounded like

"Which bed do you want?" I asked, still trying to engage him in conversation.

"Whichever, whatever it takes to shut you up." He answered with hot intensity, looking at the old bed.

"Yo, you may hate, I may hate it, but you're stuck here for a while." I replied.

"It will be the worst time of my life."

"Well then, were not so different." I answered. Our eyes met, waging a silent war, the only thing that stopped us from ripping each other's guts out was the uneasy truce, and the hopes that normal life would prevail.

The tensions finally broke when I broke the eye contact, "I got to meet someone down by Time Square, be back in an hour."

"I'll go to." The Covenant announced.

"You? Why?" I replied, as baffled as startled.

"I just want to get out of here, this place is a dump."

"Dump of not it's your home now amigo. You can come as long as you leave your weapons behindâ€¦"

Covenant Central Battle Headquartersâ€¦

The high general smiled in grim satisfaction as he watched the green demon decimate his best troops. He then watched another video, of the demon destroying a battle cruiser.

"He is perfect!" the general exclaimed to the assembled prophets in the deck of the ship.

"He, alone, can _crush_ the enemy! He is what we need!" The general

stressed, but his words met deaf ears.

"But, general, what makes you so sure he would join us?" a Prophet inquired, intrigued by this idea.

"We are allies are we not?"

But general." A prophet interrupted, "We are not strong allies. This alliance hangs like a tread, pulled just a bit, and the universe will be flooded in a time of total war."

"The same kind which we fought, and were bettered by our advisory." Added another concerned prophet.

"But my holiness, our entire 3rd fleet was wiped out! Obliterated by the Heretical group! The ! They hang their Serpent decorated banner hangs over a new planet. Their ranks swell. They are no unorganized ruble, they are well armed, and trained!" he argued his body language matching his words, "We need help! We need a hero! We need our _Ally!" _

Silent chatter filled the room of Prophets as the bickered and discussed amongst themselves.

The chatter then stopped, all at once as the high Prophet cleared his throat and announced,

"We have taken you opinions into consideration, but we have come to the conclusion that that it is not in our best interests at this time."

"What!?" The general said, his voice, rising with anger.

"We must simply fight our own war now; we can surly defeat a bunch of presents."

"But we haven't yet!" the general intervened.

"To your own incompetence, general. You are the reason this is happening. You can't beat them." The high Prophet wrongfully accused.

"This is madness! The only reason you held the line was because of me! You all know that!" he said, almost screamed, clouded by frustration and anger.

"Yes but that was before, you have outlived your skills, you are relived." The high Profit said, shaking his fingers in unison.

"This is insane!"

"Careful general Halbulas or I may put you up for Heretical charges." The high Profit warned, shaking his hand in a waving formation. The room filled with tension, the guards stood, all pointing their weapons at Halbulas, waiting to shoot. Halbulas then bowed eyes red with anger, and left the room, his brilliant mind formulating his next moveâ€¦

Down town New York, 3:10 p.m.

The city that never sleeps earned its name; even though the scars of war have slinked in, the common mass of people go about their daily lives, like nothing has happened. The only sign of a war was the crashed Covenant cruiser.

"So, your naïve people still live normal lives even though many fell." The Elite observed, with the nasty snarl.

"Yes, and your people?" I asked, turning to him.

"They will mourn for 100 days at our glorious sacrifices." He answered with glory and pride in his voice.

"Glorious? Look up there buddy! There used to be 9 towers!" I grabbed him by the neck and pointed into the sky. The only thing remaining was smoke, rising from the once great buildings.

"How about your homeland? Did your house get destroyed?" I almost interrogated, reliving my grip and lighting a smoke.

He just looked up in the sky and said, "One day, we'll all die."

"Yes, but what's important will be what you did with your time." I corrected, walking off, "but some, sooner than other", I finished lowering my head in admiration of my brothers.

The Elite looked down, and lifted his hand, eyeing the engraved X's, marking every kill he got.

"56, 56" he said silently. The enemy, the humans, he used to kill them without remorse, filled with religious teachings and propaganda he slaughtered even wounded men. They used to have no face, only the enemy. But this lone soldier, he gave them a unique personality. He thought back to the 56 he killed, and wondered if they had a personality like this ones, fiery and brave or stupid.

He was welcomed home as a hero, earning one of the highest kill records in his unit, and even welcomed into the hall of heroes.

"Heroes" he said to himself, walking in line with the human soldier.

"

6. Red, red, red

Sry that I couldn't get this one out sooner, next chapter will be out soon

USMC HQ, Pentagon, Washington

The general slowly looked over the data board, monitoring the movement of the Australian rebels.

"That's it, we got to get some men out there!" he said in pure frustration, throwing his smoke at his second in command.

"But sir, I assure you, the army is exhausted, they need their rest sir." The second in command, Harper pleaded.

"Well you can kiss my ass son. Their Marines! They never get tired!" the general shouted, right in Harper's face.

"I want an army up those Aussie's ass right now! By next week, all of the 1st division sons-of-bitches are going to be in Australia!"

"But sir, that's impossible! Illogical even!" Harper pointed out.

"Do you know General Patton son? The bitch who served in World War 2? Way back then?" the general asked, turning back to the monitor. "You know how he believed in reincarnation? Well I'm him." He said, giving a single eye to Harper.

"Uh- Yes sir! I'll get the 1st division there by tomorrow even!" Harper said, stumbled at his own words.

"Good, now get the hell out!"

2 days latter

Steven was sitting, looking out the window at the passing cars and people, almost oblivious to the war that took place some 3 months ago. Going on with their business, the occasional woman, dressed in pure black to show the loss of a husband. Cars with "Victory!" bumper stickers, and men and children thanking marines and soldiers dressed in uniform.

It's amazing were the mind were wander if you let it, I started to think about god, and the whole afterlife crap. Doubting that there was one in the first place, and if there was a god, where was he? He heard the shouts and screams of billions of people dying, most of them praying to see their child's face one more time, but god stayed death. Most Christians that came out of that war alive gave up their faith, after seeing god's creations rip each other apart without remorse, drinking each other's blood, raping their women and burning the defenseless children.

Many who came out of the war were depressed and suicidal. Losing brothers or close comrades to the raging flame of war, they noticed life is cheap and worthless. If they died, no one would give a second look, not thinking about the man killed by them, only thanking god, or how ever the hell was up there, that it wasn't them. Only the lucky were buried in that war, there was no time to waste time on paying respects to the fallen troops. Only enough time to remember the soldier's name for a few days, then they join the other fallen men in the total death tally.

"Human!" The call, pulling me back into reality, like a fish on a hook, wanting, fighting to stay in the water, but gets pulled out.

"Y-yes." I answered, hiding my surprise.

"Do you have any food?" The question came, his towering body shrinking down to avoid hitting the low roof.

"Yeah." I replied getting out of my chair, pushing past him and heading to the fridge.

"What you in the mood for?" I asked, scanning the contents over and over.

He came quickly and ushered me away, bending over to check what was in the tiny machine.

"Not much human, is your government too poor to supply you with adequate food?" The Elite said, trying to dent my pride in the government.

"Were marinesâ€¦ we never are hungry."

On the Heretic flagship, "Dominion"â€¦

"My Excellency, the super weaponâ€¦ _it is readyâ€¦" _the cloaked figure reported, breaking into a whisper as if the very walls were listening.

"Good, I am pleasedâ€¦ commence the operation. Operation Red, Red, Red." The exalted one expressed his voice drunk with pleasure and the demise of his foes. "Red will be the color of their warm blood. Red will stain their planet until its very soil is drenched with it, red will be the color of their planet when we are doneâ€¦ assemble your men commander."

"Of course my lord." The commander said, bowing twice and leavingâ€¦ but he had bigger planes than serving this fool, much bigger.

The high one sat in his high chair, in the same damply lit room, smiling. His plan was coming together, soon earth would be crushed, but he had no interests on settling the planet, he simply wanted it taken care of.

Somewhere in New Yorkâ€¦

_11:31 p.m. _Read the clock placed right next to the Elites roll away bed. He grunted in dismay, being stuck in this godforsaken apartment. They just ended the war! He should be being honored or something! Not being moved in the damn apartment. He sat up, the bed whining under his weight. He got out of the old dorm; he needed time to think, by himself as he used to do in his home world.

Rain fell in big drops as he slowly trudged through the rarely abandoned streets. He felt no connection to this foreign land, if a meteor came and destroyed the whole damn planet he'd be fine with that. His mind refused to stop the relentless stream of questions, pouring like the rain dancing off the sidewalk. He walked towards an old fountain, its brilliant streams of water gushing out, dancing with the lights.

The blue jets of this fountain even spawned more questions, his head focused on the coins in the water. Pitiful dreams which people thought would come true by putting a few cents into the water.

The rain stopped, the Elite looked up, a black umbrella covered him, "Beautiful isn't it?" A voice came, startling him, but refusing to show his fear.

"I used to come here to when I had to think." The African-American recalled, digging into memories long past.

"Who are you human?" the Elite asked, trying to hide his dismay.

"Names Danâ€¦ You?"

"I don't have a name, it's an unnecessary burden."

"Come on" said he, "I need something to call you."

"How aboutâ€¦ Stride?"

He thought about it, only wanting to shoo away the annoying questions.

"Fine, fine." The Elite, Stride said.

â€¦

7. Chapter 7

â€¦ The next dayâ€¦

... USMC Main headquarters, Pentagon, Washington DCâ€¦

"Ha! I told you son, never doubt the Marines. They'll kick your ass if you do!" General H.R. Herman exclaimed, the love for his troops, legendary. He was once a Marine, a hard headed stubborn assed mule, who loved warfare. He raised quickly through the ranks, finally becoming a 2 star general, leader of the operation, "Outhouse." Which aimed to knock out the Australian rebels. The operation involved 10,230 men, 1,000 new "Scorpions" main battle tank, 150 aircraft, and 36 battle cruisers. The operation was a logistical nightmare; the job of transporting around 1 million tons to troops based in Australia was no walk in the park, it was coordinated by the brilliant minds from the 1st British logistical corps.

"There's no were to run nowâ€¦" Herman slowly murmured, slowly licking his lips as if he could taste the cold fear he inspired in his enemies, the black death was approaching.

â€¦ Covenant Command post 4â€¦

"Confirm that last relay orderly." The distressed noncom ordered, his face betting sweet.

"Yes sirâ€¦ uhhh, message sent by the commander of Flag ship "Madala." The orderly reported, reviewing the touch screen panel displaying information.

"Any word since? Or explanation?" The distressed noncom asked, his face growing pale from anxiety.

"No sir, uhhh, but, uhhh, general Rickets reports massive enemy withdrawal all along the front, enemy activity has decreased 31, and have apparently pulled back all forward units along the front."

The noncom and his crew were silent; they all knew what this was adding up to, a massive invasion. But where? Was the question, and, how many. His orderlies in the makeshift compound all seemed to tense up at what he would say next.

The noncom let out a sigh, as if all of his life experiences were let out with it, "Call the commander in chief and the humans, and alert them to this troubling aspect."

"Sir!"

—|New York, New Hayward college field|—

The day was just like all other mid November days, cold, wet, groggy. The rain which fell in quantity last night mixed the grass with a sea of grimy mud. The empty rows of seats in the stands gave silent witness to the peculiar players, romping around on the field.

"Hey what did you say your name is?" Steven asked the Elite as they walked through the thick mud covering the field.

"Stride."

"Nice name. For an asshole." Steven mumbled under his breath.

"_Amarikaner!_Let's get started!"The Italian urged, his face smeared with mud and grime. His white shirt stained from hours of football. Steven knelt down, muscles tense and sprigged.

"Two thirty two! Five six! Hut, hut hike!" the sounds of a line of gritty men smashing into each other, army helmets clashing. Steven started dashing towards the goal line, cutting left running ten yards, turning around, expecting the ball to be spinning in the air heading towards him. It was, the ball impacted his chest, and he capped it with his hands. He had no time to react, the defender was right there. Steven was smashed into the ground, sliding across the mud, the ball remaining firmly in his hands. It was Stride who made the tackle.

"Nice run, nice run." The Italian clapped.

"Help me up." Steven insisted, his arm rose out. Stride pulled him up of the muddy field.

"Nice play." Steven complemented, "Didn't know you could play."

"Well you don't know a lot of things." His sarcastic voice replied.

—|_Latter at the Irish Pub|—

"Your boys in the army?" the attractive waitress asked in her sing-song voice.

"Marines." The Italian replied, enjoying the company.

"Ahh. Drinks on the house."

The bar was empty except us, and some guys from the 101.

"Hey. Waitress. Were the airborne!" one of the buff men shouted, clearly drunk.

"What are the screaming eagles screaming for?" the Italian asked his buddies.

"Help! Help!" Was the reply.

The result was a brawl between the two sides. The wateriest desperately tried to calm them down, to have another bear. But fists flew, as the young heroes over did it with the alcohol, letting it go to their heads and starting unnecessary fights with other companies. The MPs were exhausted at trying to keep the tyrants from started another civil war. The first month the people of New York were happy to great the heroes of Earth, happy to buy them a drink and a meal. But the alcohol was too much to the young troopers. They started to wreak the town, smashing windows and setting fires. A joke was going around that the MPs would get a Presidential Satiating for service above and beyond when the Military came in.

"Soldiers!" a sharp voiced tall statured caped 6 foot tall green uniformed man shouted, and all motion Immediately stopped, and gave ear.

He picked up a chair and threw it across the bar, smashing against the other wall. The wateriest fled into the other room, shrieking. He slowly approached a fallen paratrooper, picking him up by the collar and pinning him up by the wall.

"You're giving the military a god-damn name!" he said very calmly, whispering into the paratrooper's ear, "I don't like people giving the military a bad name." He through the man to the floor, unclenching his colt 56, and pointed the barrel of the gun right towards the man. Steven sat at the bar, uninterested by the petty fight, him and Stride conversing about the war and politics noticed the click of the barrel of a 56.

"Get up you slob." The capped man said, putting his gun back, "This happens again, my gun will have 8 less rounds." He said, walking out the door.

The scuffling men got up, and started putting the chairs back in line, not exchanging a word with each other.

â€| Latter

"That was some shit you got yourself into." Steven said, his eyes looking at the Italians bruised face.

"I was defending my girl." He replied.

"That was just stupid man, could have got busted down to private again." Steven said.

"Well I didn't, I played the line."

"Hey Steven!" a cherry voice alerted me.

"Dan." I said, acknowledging him with a nod.

"Why are you guys out here?" he asked, looking amongst are persons.

"Just coming back from the pub." The Italian said, Scratching his chin.

"Had fun I see." Dan regarded to the Italians bruises.

"Yes, much fun."

"How you doing elite?" Dan asked now, looking at the towering creature.

"Surviving." His sarcastic reply came.

"That's always important." Dan replied with the same note in his voice.

8. Operation God Almighty

Authors note:

For all who want to take my story and do something else with it or just expand on my story, I'm totally fine with it. Like Kinddomheartsmaster, check out his fic, sounds interesting. And thanks for Kavek and others for their reviews appreciate it and I do appreciate any criticism or story line opinions.

Flash backâ€|

_ Day 15 of operation God Almightyâ€|_

The pelicans spurted under the constant use, moaning under the weight of the warthog. The 12 or so marines jammed in enjoyed no heat, but below freezing temperatures. There was no room in the transport with all the ammo and supplies we were transporting to combat group 32 of the 99th division.

"DZ in thirty seconds! Pray to god and load yourself just in case he isn't there!" the commander of our raggedy over worked squad said. It was a lame joke but the desperate men would laugh at anything.

The hatch opened up, reviling a snow barren landscape with multiple smoking corpses of tanks and men. The town of New Minsk, a smoking ruin now which changed hands 5 times already in the past 15 days. The moderate slope going up 20 feet or so surrounding the town was filled with tank caucuses, which have been burning for days. No building was standing higher than 35 feet. The town's population fled, except the occasional man who would offer whatever he had to the advancing and fleeing troops, and then would hide when the Covenant took the village back.

A line of tanks and men advanced towards the village to relive the BEF. The battle was not far off, the woods all around the villages were still a hot bed for resistance, and the all towns had to be secured in order for the operation to succeed, then they would have a

straight shot towards the covenant ship bay. And in securing the ship bay, the Covenant would be out of supplies and be forced to surrender or die.

"What the hell?" the pilot of the pelican wondered as a lone AA gun started firing on our group of 3 pelicans in the lone sky filled with smoke. The blue plasma was fired in short bursts, its aim very bad because the fire was safely to the right.

"Didn't our guys take this sector?" the co-pilot asked, checking his map.

"Hey sarg, isn't this job for the airborne?" A bundled up marine asked, his collar all the way up trying to keep the cold away.

"There a little short handed." The stork reply came from the "Sarg", who always volunteered our squad for activities like this, even though our company has sustained 87 casualties and was replaced by green soldiers, who only had about 120 days of training before being thrown into this shit.

"DZ 10 seconds!"

"Touch down is going to be hot, Parker take Bill and Scardina and find out where the 99ers are and report back here! Steven, Johnson, Bob, take the warthogs and lead them to the farmhouse on your HUD, then report back here, will be preparing to take the main road to Neinville." The Sarg directed, his hands waving in furious motions. His winter clothes like all of ours restricting his movements.

The pelicans slowed and landed near a smoking tank and artillery gun in a break in the forest. One clear path was just big enough to drive the warthogs through, but the 99ers were nowhere to be found.

"Pile out! Go, go, go!" the Sarg ordered as we got out of the cramped pelican one by one in a line.

"Get the ammo out! Disconnect the warthog. Secure the area!"

I jumped out of the pelican, and surveyed the bleak forest. There was smoke, but that was it coming from the forest.

"We'll set up shop here; we got two more pelicans coming in soon, and their bringing tanks and ammo." The Sarg communicated with the other two squad leaders.

"I'll send five men up that ridge over there to check it out. Make sure there no nasty surprises." A squad leader requested, which was agreed with a nod from the Sarg.

"Kurd."

"Sir." Was the automatic reply from 1st lieutenant Kurd.

"Take three men, including Donny, and scout the cluster of houses not too far from here, meet back with us after you finish your sweep." The Sarg ordered, Kurd saluted, gathered his men, and started in the direction of the houses.

"The Warthogs ready!" the noncom said, hitting the side of the beast.

"I got gun." I said, climbing onto the top, prepping the turret.

The other two members assumed positions on the Warthog, navigator and driver.

"You got lead!" the driver of the Warthog said to us.

"Aw shit, Bobs drivin." Johnson complained, cocking his gun again, obsessed with the sound it made.

"Shut up and buckle up." He replied, starting the engine and slowly heading towards the path through the dense forest. The other two Warthogs slowly followed. All the men were on edge, focusing on the white environment, eyes darting from place to place. Our mercury read 16 degrees; with wind chill it was probably lower then 5.

"I can't feel my ass!" Johnson said, surprised, rubbing his butt, and trying to get feeling into it.

"That'll save you pain when you get shot in the ass." I cracked, trying to lift the mood.

"Johnson, this is Sarg. Kurd ran into trouble. Reporting one KIA. They are pinned down near you. After you secure the farm, send a Warthog to clear the resistance. Over." The voice crackled statically through the radio.

"Roger that CP." Johnson replied, writing down the coordinates appearing on his HUD.

The endless rows of white trees were scarce with any movement. The slightest movement would catch your eye, and you would immediately be on edge, ready to fire. Then you notice it was nothing, feeling silly but relived you would start the process once again.

"Stay tight, were nearly there." Bob said, his eyes peeled on the road, "Bingo"

We pulled out of the forest into a clearing about 100 feet around a lone 3-story intact farm house. It was by definition the perfect defensive point. Our Warthogs parked in the empty barn house, finally covered from the snow.

"CP, we've reached the farm house. Over." Johnson reported, pulled out his SMG and jumped out off the Warthog, still rubbing his butt.

"Uhhh. Copy that." The voice confirmed. Suddenly, a new voice crackled to life on the radio. It was not human, but covenant. The voice spoke perfect English, and solemnly warned us "Ahh, good day men. It is not your day to die. Live another day. Surrender and you will be treated well. You are surrounded, surrender." It slowly came, a low laugh at the end.

The nine marines stood there, not shivering but sweating. Surrounded? If what the enemy spoke was true, it is the end for them.

"CP! CP!" Johnson called frantically into the radio, trying to get some life into it.

"What do we do?" a marine asked.

"Okâ€| uh, one Warthog goes back and alerts CP. The rest of us stay here and give them hell." The order from Bob came out. Simple, but effective.

"Get the guns of those mounts!"

"Get some bazookas over here!"

"MG ready!"

"Oh God they have armor in the woods!"

Bob frantically tried to coordinate the defense as best he could, being the highest ranking man there, he had to take charge, but didn't want to.

"Get going Mac!" Bob shouted at the driver in the Warthog, who was just finishing throwing off the ammo. The man then jumped in the Warthog with another man and speed away, drawing no fire.

I took a deep breath; my view on the third floor was unmatched. My co-gunner and spotter squatted next to me, our gun mounted out of a window, its tripod on a table. An unbearable silence fell over the deathly woods. This was of no doubt the worst part of a battle. This the only time you can think clearly. Fear grips you, as you think of illogical ways of escaping and going home, fleeing this hell. But when you saw the enemy, that feeling vanished. All you could think of was destroying the enemy, kill, kill, kill.

A cry from the woods erupted, long and ferocious. It was answered by many more, all joining in unison forming one ferocious war cry. It then was ruptured by many individual cries, and the sounds of tanks. A line of elites and grunts started charging without the tanks in front of them, firing randomly at the windows. They charged from all sides, surrounding and running at full speed. My clear thinking stopped, the only way I was getting home now was by a body bag. I and the other marines in the house started let rip on the howling hordes, and bazooka shots rang from inside the house, detonating in masses of covenants. My gun spurt out round after round of ammo, in arch formations sweeping the masses, thinning their lines greatly. But the line kept coming, its men undaunted from the pilling dead and wounded mounting up on the blood soaked snow.

The line of covenant thinned, 20, 10, 5, until one remained. Limping towards the house, ten feet from it, repeating some propaganda verse over and over. Three shots came from the barn house felling the foe, which dropped to the snow, repeating the verse until his dying breath. I looked all around; about fifty corpses covered the barn's fields. But that was only the first wave. The similar cry from the woods started, followed by the roar of the covenant and the advancement of tanks. The crackling sounds of guns reloading sounded from the two lower floors in the house.

"Get those launchers over there." I commanded, pointing to a box of twin barreled launchers. My gun was smoking; I tried cooling it down

with snow but it would melt instantly.

"Here you go sir." The breathless private reported.

"Take the MG." I commanded, taking the launcher and leaving the room.

I ran down the stairs, nearly falling in my flight. I kicked the front door down walking out into the exposed terrain. The charge resumed, and the machine guns took up their regular chorus of ugly death upon the enemy. A tank ripped through the trees, not even bothering to stop for its own troops, running them down. My target was fast approaching as blue plasma shoots through up the snow all around me. I knelt down, bracing for the upcoming impact. I squeezed the trigger; two shoots ejected through the tubes and spiraled into the target, one penetrating the armor right beneath the gun turret igniting the plasma fuel, setting it a wonderful blaze, purifying the infantry seeking cover from its armor.

"Steven you asshole get back in here!" Bob screamed over the firefight, waving to come back. I took off in a dead sprint, the covenant were zeroing in on me, snow leapt into my face and explosions detonated near me. My fellow marines still firing volleys of deadly bullets into the mass of troops. I jumped into the barn, an explosion throwing me in.

"Were the hell are the 99ers!?" I asked, being helped up by Bob.

"Get back to your position." He replied in a grin, picking up the fire on the enemy.

The firefight intensified, the covenant like one big animal kept coming, and wave after wave came, reminding me of Poland. Finally we started running out of ammo one by one, and still no help.

"Is there ammo in there?" I asked my co gunner, pointing to the box.

"No! Were out!" he replied with wide eyes and a panicked look, "What are we going to do?"

"Bob!" I cried, "Any ammo down there?"

"No! Were all dry! James is hit! He sprung a hundred leaks; our medic says he's got nothing left in him!"

A grenade lobed in through our window, "Grenade!" I called grabbing and throwing the grenade out the window. I let rip with my SMG, firing in short bursts, conserving the three clips I had, 60 bullets in each clip.

"Short burst only!" Bob called from downstairs, desperately trying to keep his squad together.

"Can't! There's too many!" a gunner called, his gun almost melting from the heat.

"Tank!" came an alarmed call from the second floor.

"Get a launcher on that baby!"

"Were out!"

"They broke through the door!" a combat exhausted marine called, his voice suggesting that he didn't care if he lived or died. Firing erupted from the bottom floor, barks of SMG and the whine of plasma guns mixed together, as if one orchestra.

A shell ripped through the third floor, throwing me to the ground in a bloody mess.

"You want me! Come and take me!!" my shell shocked co gunner screamed, firing his pistol out the window. Another shell impacted again, killing him instantly, sending his body to the other side of the floor. Shots rang out from the second floor, but were silenced, and metal footsteps came up the stairs. I drew my pistol, trying to hold out, waiting with deaf hope for the reinforcements to arrive.

An Elite charged me, his plasma sword drawn; my gun felled the enemy, implanting three lead shoots into the foe. Another came up the stair way, this time carrying a human knife probably retrieved from a dead comrade. My gun fired three more shoots, and then jammed. I threw my helmet at the foe, in faint hope that he would just fall over and die. But of course it isn't that easy.

The metal beast jumped on me, his powerful arms trying to impale me with the sharp knife. I tried with the faltering remains of my adrenaline to force the foe of me. I forced my last energy to force my feet up, and the foe of me. I tried to stagger up, my vision blurring and I felt my head swim.

A figure headed for me at inhuman speeds, grabbing my arm and putting pressure on it until it snapped, then threw me to the ground. He then rushed the other elite, kneeing him twice and flipping him over, his 300 pound body slamming the floor. My fading vision made out another elite, covered in a heavy winter coat, with many decorations and medals. He had a gray green cap, the same color as his coat. He had a holstered P21, more of an antique then a killing machine. Highly prized by all branches of the human military.

"Be still" he spoke soothingly and in perfect English, as if a caring mother tending to her boy with a scraped knee. He injected me with a small needle, instantly sending into a "blank".

"Why are we keeping this scum alive!" the elite fumbled, and then got up.

"They fight well, eliminating almost all of my zealous elite company."

"Teach them proper respect them!"

"Now, that wouldn't be fair." The esteemed commander said, taking the "death note" from the limp body. He opened it casually, looking it over.

"Bring him and the rest of the POWs back, and start the forward advance."

"Yes general." The elite bowed, then started hauling the human up.

But what of the 99ers and the Warthog sent back bound towards Sarg's group?

The 99ers fell back 2 hours before Sarg arrived. A Warthog carcass was discovered near the farm house. And Sarg was forced to pull back in the next day of fighting in the woods.

The town of Neinville was surrounded by the wave of zealous attackers. A relentless assault descended upon Neinville, and part of the battle was a sniper going by the name of the "Italian".

â€|

9. Another day in the Core

CP in Neinville, 0910

"I encountered large amounts of infantry and some armor, us and some stray 99ers held here, but we were forced to pull back." The Sarge reported, pointing at different areas in the map, the lone light rumbling at the armor relocating outside.

"How many?" the general asked, taping the table over and over in a furious manner.

"200 or so, plus armor."

"And our numbers?"

"A little over fifty men with ten tanks and some assorted arms and AT weapons."

"Well, then, I'm sure our infantry are up for the task ofâ€| holding this town." The general said, drinking from his tin cup.

"Can we expect any reinforcement's sir?" Sarg asked, reviewing the map.

"We got to hold this town as long as we can. Battalion Head Quarters says "Give us 5 days and nights of hard fighting and you will be relived.""

"I'll see if I can motivate my men." Sarge said.

"Please do." The general said.

On top of the Church towerâ€|

"Well, isn't this great. The big fucking cheese puts us up in this tower. I mean, don't they watch the movies? The enemy always suspects snipers in the church tower!" the angry "Bill Hickok" complained. The glass was always 1/10th empty to him, his mouth, only there to complain the situation. Bill shut the hell up was a standard saying in the company.

"Bill. Shut the hell up man, the damn Covies probably can hear you." The usually cool headed "Italian" said, adjusting the sites on his sniper rifle.

"Damn, it's so cold; I couldn't tell if someone shot me!" Bill cracked, trying to add some humor.

"Wow, you are the lamest joker in the USMC"

"Wait, I got movement, east of town. Tell HQ, I'm taken the shot." The Italian eye focused his eye near the sight. A Covenant with blue armor stood surveying the town with binoculars, possibly for artillery of some sort. Hell, to the Italian, he looked like a damn general standing 8 feet tall. He squeezed the trigger, ejecting a metal shell at lighting speeds. The piece of metal tore through the soft unarmored flesh of the neck, blood spaying all over a tree next to him. And he lay there, moaning, another shot finished that.

"Let's relocate; I don't think those Covies like us."

Covenant HQ near Neinvilleâ€|

"Sir, we have enemy reinforcements closing all around it, I'm not sure that they know that this is our last gamble to brake their lines and take out their orbital cannon." The noncom reported, dusting the snow of his overcoat.

"Have you ever heard of Hitler?" The calm general asked, enjoying a smoke in his chair.

"No sir and what does this have to do with our current situation?"

"He's a fascinating figure, believed in an all Aryan race." He trailed off, "Yes, I believe we are in the position. A last offensive."

"Uh sir-"

"Hitler's plan almost succeeded, but he was defeated. How? Bastogne. The Americans held out, defending the town and thwarting the offensive. And the Americans tend to do the same in Neinville." The general continued, cutting off the noncom and standing up. "Let's hope we do not allow them to do that."

â€| Back and Neinville...

The Italian and others sat in the bar, listening to old tunes and sampling the wines. A dark mood hung over them, trying to enjoy the last night of safety, trying to enjoy the rest of their lives in one night.

The Italian was cleaning and maintaining his sniper rifle, cleaning and oiling it. The other soldiers were sitting quietly, probably thinking of home or sweethearts. The things they fought for.

"Hey guys, at least one day a video game will be about us. We could look forward to that." A young soldier commented. He was right; no

one gave note back at home unless shells were falling around them. The best recognition we could get is a book written about their actions or a video game.

â€| Neinville, 0950â€|

"Here we are again." Bill said, curling up in the high church tower.

"Yes-sir-e." The Italian replied, making last minute adjustments and then cocking his weapon.

"God I love that sound." The Italian said, licking his chapped lips.

"God, how long are the damn Covies gonna make us wait up here?"

"As long as they goddamn want, we got a town to protect, and I'm happy if they all just come out surrendering." The Italian starkly said, trying to shoo away the unwanted questions.

Then, movement. The woods seemed to shuffle around as the impending attack was about to happen.

"This is what I live for." The Italian mumbled to himself, a big grin on his face.

Two Covenant Banshees swooped in low over head, dropping bombs on the town. Blue flames danced and ate with pleasure the old wood on the buildings. Then a whole squadron of them appeared, and with them, a Covenant battle curser high above them.

They harassed freely against any moving target, even bombing a tank corpse that was already burning. Enjoying and taking advantage of the break of the relentless snowing. Some even hovered low around the streets, like one searching for individual targets. But all changed when our air boys showed.

"Yeaha!" Bill cheered, throwing his helmet in the air.

A large number of our P23's engaged the banshees, which ensued in a brilliant aerial display of skill and hatred. They flew in low around our town, some even crashing into each other.

"Angels our backs!" Bill said, putting his helmet full of snow back on.

"Then that must be god." I said, looking up to one of our magnificent battle cruisers. Which was sparring with the Covenant one, firing short bursts of cannon pulses.

Some pelicans attempted to airdrop some men to us, but were targeted out from the group. They flew in a wedge formation, three of them, and started dropping men were ever. Some even landed in the blue flames. A pelican's engine was hit, which caused a brilliant explosion over the small town, making a thunderous boom when it hit the ground.

Then a large wave of Covenant ground forces charged through the trees, supported by tanks. They rushed into the exposed snowy field

surrounding Neinville. Explosions racketed their lines, but they did not falter.

Mad war cries came from their ranks, as they advanced ahead of the protection of the tanks, coming from all sides. But the church tower the Italian was in was by far the biggest building in the town, giving a vantage point covering all sides.

The Italian grinned with the sight of the mass destruction brought on his enemy, his main deterrent from getting back home. He fired slowly; making sure no bullet was wasted hitting soft snow. His partner set up his heavy MG and started firing at long range, which was woefully inaccurate because we were in the center of town.

"Sniper team, how many hostels are inbound?" the general of our group asked with a frenzied tone.

The Italian started a rushed counting, standing up to do the job.

"105." The Italian told his partner.

"105?"

"105" the Italian repeated again.

"This is Sniper team, we are reporting about 105 hostels inbound. Confirm message." Bill reported in the radio stationed next to them.

"Message conferred." The general grimly confirmed

"Hostels right." Another voice from the radio came, and like an automaton, the Italian focused on the right side, and started emptying his 10 round cartridge from his custom wielded sniper rifle.

Two flares shot up from the woods, and a second of oppressive was broken by a thunderous bombardment on the town.

"They were attacking the rubble." The Sarge said after the battle.

A piece of shrapnel hit Bills arm, causing him to grunt in pain, but refused to back down from his MG, and kept firing away. The Covenant forces were halted about 100 yards away from the town, slowly advancing closer and closer.

_â€| Now Swaps to Sargeâ€| _

"We are drawing heavy fire, need fire support! Can you hear me general?" the Sarge furiously shouted into the radio, maddened by the decimation of his squad. One of his squad members was dragging a wounded comrade from a window, after being hit twice.

They were held up in the front most house in the town, a two story one. It was targeted by the tanks the Covenants used, drawing heavy fire.

"Sarge, stay calm. Air strike is on route." The general reported. Two fighters came low, strafing the enemy lines, and a bomber dropped its

pay load, going up to return to the battle in the skies.

"Thank you General! Payload on target!"

"This is B5, glad we could help." The report from the bomber came.

"Our pleasure!" the Sarge replied.

He returned to the window, surveying and firing on all moving targets.

"Sir! You should see this!!" A frightened marine said, his eyes wide open.

"What is it sonâ€¦ Shitâ€¦ Concentrate all fire on them! Take them down! Bring them down!!" The Sarge screamed pointing furiously at the new foes.

"What the hell are they doing?"

"Grunt bombs." The Sarge said, and started firing at the line of grunts lead by one elite.

â€¦Switches back to the Italianâ€¦

"Hey, Bill. Check this out." The Italian said a humors tone in his voice.

Bill stopped firing, he leaned over hi MG to see what his partner was talking about.

"Well, well, their trying to make us use all of our bullets!"

"Stay awake up their! Direct all fire to those grunts!" a voice from the radio came.

Another stray bomb came from the fighters overhead exploded next to the tower, causing a terrible shacking.

"This is going to be too easy!"

â€¦Switches to a Grunt on the Covenant sideâ€¦

"They can't make us go! There's no need to send us!" the scared little grunt thought, trying to make sense of this made situation.

"The first wave will get it done! Calm down, you'll be fine!" he kept telling himself, trying to distract himself from the real truth.

He had joined the military during the zealous first days of the war, and has been fighting in almost all theaters of war. Every were he fought the elites and brutes looked down on them, but this only made them work harder and build a tough character. He grew up in poor conditions. And he was looking for a way to get better pay and recognition, and a pamphlet went around for an "Elite Division." It said it would give a 24 day leave to any participants and a 25 pay increase. This appealed to him because he could visit home and talk to his family. And have more money to send back to them.

But now he was in some snow forest spearheading a relentless last attack. He would normally like the circumstances, but he wasn't going into battle with a gun, but a bomb. He was being used as a Covenant bomb, the timer was primed to two minutes, and their job would be to run into anything in their paths.

"All right men! You will be greatly rewarded in the afterlife for your rave services to the mighty gods! The prophets will not forget your noble sacrifice!" an Elite dressed in guardian armor spoke, his voice dominant over even the loudest explosions.

It was met by whines and grunts.

â€|Switches to Sargeâ€|

"God damn it! Fall back! Secondary defensive positions!" Sarge directed, standing in the open street, covering the retreat of the wounded from the burning buildings. Him and other Marines slowly wheeling back, trying to hold off the advancing hordes.

"Get him off me! Damn it!" a Marine called, trying to shake off a clinging grunt, holding on to him, as if for dear life.

"Don't move!" Sarge said, taking aim at the grunt. He fired a short burst, killing the small fiend.

"What the hell?" the startled Marine said, sitting down on the snow despite bullets flying everywhere.

Sarge turned over the grunt, and on his stomach was a bomb type object.

"Fall back! Get out of here!" The Sarge screamed, taking the Marine by the collar and pulling him with him.

Ten seconds latter a huge explosion followed by many more all went off, blue blood splattering everywhere.

â€| Switches back to the Gruntâ€|

They did it! They broke through!" a cheerful cry came from one of the grunts, followed by many sighs of relief.

The grunt took a deep breath; maybe he would get back home from this pointless war. He remembered the warm evenings in his small home world. No one was ever in a hurry, taking it slow. But he was blinded by the propaganda, and he signed up to the army in his narrow vision. Now he was here. Cause and effect.

"We still go!!" The Elite shouted, silencing everyone. The blind hope was dashed, and now only the simple truth remained. Death.

"Forward men! You have two minutes to hurl yourself into the enemy! Charge!" the Elite screamed, but no one reacted.

"You have 10 seconds to move out!"

"10! 9â€| 8â€|7â€|6â€|5â€|" he began the countdown, as all guards cocked their weapons in unison, trying to inspire fear.

Some grunts started to go forward, and then followed by everyone.

"Start the countdown." The Elite said, a grin on his face.

—â€|Switches to the Italianâ€|—

"New wave coming in." Bill said, reloading his MG.

"Their strapped with bombs too." The Italian reported his rifle barrel even with its cooling devise still hot.

"Looks like our flyboys are winning!" Bill said, grunting at the pain of the old wound.

"Bill, go down and get some medical aid. Can't have you die out here." The Italian sympathetically said.

"Yeah, I'll be right back after I get patched up." He grunted as he got up to get up.

He got up, getting ready to climb down the stairs when a bullet impacted his head killing him instantly, his body falling down the stairs and blood splattering everywhere on the hole site.

"Shitâ€| Bill? Bill!? Damn it." The Italian shouted, but with no avail.

"HQ I lost my spotter, enemy sniper. Going to try to take him out."

The Italian had a vague clue were the sniper fired, but he couldn't be sure. He stood up, a bullet zoomed right above him, and he took his shot. There was no more trouble from that sniper anymore.

—â€|Goes back to the Gruntâ€|—

The grunt rushed towards the town, drawing light fire. Most of the fighting was now situated around the center of the town.

He looked up; they seemed to be losing in the skies also, now enemy fighters would break off of formation to strafe.

"Follow me soldier. When we get into a building I'll deactivate the bomb." A fellow comrade said, giving him faint hope that he could get out of this mess.

He followed him like a sheep, if he jumped in a fire I would have went in also. We finally reached the town and went into a building. Our timers read 0:43 seconds left.

The fellow grunt started to deactivate his own bomb, finishing it with around 0:23 seconds left. He rushed to finish the other grunts. Luckily he did with 0:09 seconds left.

For some reason, one started to laugh, and he joined me. Hell, it was like the end of the war for us, but of course it wasn't. They heard

many explosions outside, and then remembered the senseless killing of many fine men.

"What's your name?" he asked the other.

"Jebol." I (The main grunt) said.

Kane here." He said.

They started out, Jebol was behind Kane, who walked out onto the streets.

Bang! He could hear it out of all the bullets flying around. It was a sniper. A burst of blue blood came from Kane's head, killing him instantly.

"No!!" I maidenly said, running out onto the street to check on my dead friend. The sniper must have had compassion, because he didn't kill me when he easily could have.

â€|Switches to Sargeâ€|

Sarge walked out of the burning building, quite stunned. But ahead of him was a grunt, examining a dead friend. The grunt noticed him, his eyes pleading to be spared. The Sarge upholstered his pistol, and stood there, looking at the grunt.

Sarge pulled the trigger, hitting the grunt right through the neck.

"No hard feelings." He said, talking to the corpse.

Another shot hit the grunt, but this time it was a mercy one, killing him.

That was the end of the main attack, the Covenant started to pull back into the woods. Their fighters in the sky started to retreat, and their main covenant cruiser was going down into the woods.

â€|Goes back to the church towerâ€|

The Italian sat down, throwing his sniper rifle down onto the ground below.

He heard footsteps coming up the stairs, and two marines came out, carrying an American flag. They proudly displayed it over the burning village, proclaiming victory.

Back at the Covenant HQâ€|

"Sir, our combined forces have failed to take Neinville. All is lost." The noncom reported, expecting a harsh reply.

"Well. Now I and Hitler are really in the same position. Well. This is interesting, all we can do is dig in a hold out." The laid back general said, still reading his book.

"Sir? How about we surrender? That seems the most humane way!" the noncom pleaded.

"Out of the question. If we did, there would be a revolt, all zealot divisions would disband after they hear we surrender. We have but one way out of this, death or victory." He said.

The noncom fell silent, he grew pale. The general noticed his dismay.

"You may leave if you wish, surrender to the humans. They will treat you well." The general said.

"Thank you sir."

"Keep this off the record. You'll be listed as MIA."

—â€|—

10. The Plan

This Chapter is inspired by events in World War Two

—â€| Near Neinville, POW campâ€|—

The snow never stopped those days. It just kept coming, giving no regard to the soldiers in the small area provided. Marked by barbed wire and guards surrounding the area. The humans stood close to each other, trying to keep their pitiful from freezing in the intense cold, even the Elites surrounding them. The humans stood there waiting to be led in a old cafÃ© to be interrogated.

There were endless lines of wounded and POW's going to the rear. There were few to come up to the front to take the place of the men coming to the rear.

"Looks like our boys are doing quite well without us in the front." Bob mumbled to me, the cold affecting his voice, making it shake. His bloody eye cover needed to be changed, but there were no supplies available.

"Hey you! Shut up!" a guard called, enjoying his smoke in the shed near the cafÃ©.

"Fuck you." Bob replied, not very loud though. Unfortunately the guard heard him.

"All right! Get over here!" the guard angrily said, throwing his smoke on the ground and walking over to the unfortunate marine.

He opened the gate, and pushed me out of the way, grabbing Bob by the collar.

"What did you say you little piece of shit?" the guard asked, pulling Bob right next to his face.

"I said, Yo mama's a piece of shit."

The guard through Bob to the snowy ground, all other prisoners gravitated away from the brawl, not wanting anything to do with it. I stood up, and I just watched.

"Please gentlemen, let's not shed anymore blood this day." A sympathetic voice called, his arms up as if a father trying to help two children make amends with each other.

The Elite rolled his eyes, and dropped Bob as if he was a sack of potatoes.

"Forgive me." The Elite said, taking a bow, and then leaving out of site.

"I am sorry, forgive his antics. He is merely saddened at the site of his brothers being wounded and killed in such senseless combat." He wsaid, his words preaching a new tune to our ears, peace. All Covenant I met until this point were fanatics and zealous. Ready to kill in the name of faith at a moment's notice.

"Next!" another voice interrupted, fingering me.

I walked to the guard, who opened the gate for me and pointed to the building. The crazy peace talker still going on about how this is a false and unholy war, that we should make peace. But it met deaf, bloody, and depressed ears. No one wanted to be here, it was written all over their faces. Even the toughest soldier cracked, and hoped that they could just go home.

I entered the cafÃ©, and in a small room probably used for the storeroom of some sorts. There sat a high ranking official, sitting there calmly, looking me straight in the eye. He wore the standard green coat and cap, his armor white. A single table was present, and with a light and a bottle of a liquid with two cups.

"Sit" he ordered.

I complied, taking a seat on the wooden chair.

"You look thirsty, here, drink." He offered, pouring me some and reaching out to hand me the drink.

I kept my eyes on him, not accepting the drink.

"It perfectly safe." He insured, sampling it himself. I half expected him to fall to the floor choking and gasping for breath. But he sat there perfectly normal and put the drink down.

"Were you the leader of the group in the barn?" he asked, turning business like and stern.

"No"

"How many men are in Neinville?"

"Too many"

"Who is leading you?"

"Yo mama" I replied, and with each time doing so, flirting with death.

"How many were in the barn?" he asked, a question I was happy to

answer.

"Nine" I answered, my face bearing a smile reflecting the grim pleasure of the fresh massacre.

His eyes widened in disbelief.

"You lie" he accused.

"How many did we kill?" I asked, trying to turn the tables on the interrogator.

"144 men, 4 tanks. All my best." He replied, and a silence fell over us.

"Who is that crazy man out there?" I asked, referring to the prophet.

"He is of dying bread. He preaches peace. A sweet dream but not a reality. We were all just born to die." He calmly said, taking another drink in the middle of his sentence. "Who do you think will win this war?" he asked me, putting the glass cup down.

"That question is obvious. We will."

"Really?"

"Yes, when your reinforcements try to invade, they will break like water hitting the rocks."

"Well, will just see about that."

â€|Back at Neinvilleâ€|

The general studied the map impatiently; the nagging order from up high bothered him. It risked some of his best men, men who needed and deserved rest. The fighting was fierce for the small town, 350 dead, 54 ships lost, and all but two tanks.

Two attempts have been made to try to take the town; the first was the most significant. Now it was believed the Covenant forces were all but spent. The blockade around the planet was still in place, and their air force was now almost none existence.

"Good day general." Sarge said, entering the room.

"Ahh, Sarge. I have a mission for you, right from the top." The general said, "It's a mission of high importance."

"Continue"

"One of fleet commander Hendar's sons has been taken as a POW and is being held in a camp not far from here. Given the Covenants position, they may well kill all POWs while retreating. So naturally he is concerned. And that's where you come in." he said, crossing his arms.

"I need you to take some men, and armor including APCs and the works and raid the enemy POW station." He said, "Recon puts the camp about three clicks south of here, I want you to rescue this damsel in

distress and get out of there." The general continued.

"That's a good start, but what of the other prisoners?" Sarge asked, also looking at the map.

"We don't and won't have enough transportation for all of them. So take about 50, highest ranking men of course, and get out."

"But we'll get cut to pieces; the Covies will send all they got left against us." Sarge in quested, not wanting more senseless massacres.

"Our commander gave this mission a high priority impasse, so we will stage a diversionary strike to the north. That will hopefully confuse them long enough for your raid." The general explained.

"How many men under my command?"

"Your pick of 50, choice them well and remember speed is the key here. Our strike to the north won't hold up for long. The Sergeant in charge of the northern strike says they could probably only hold for about 5 hours, so be quick." The general warned.

"Which road are we using?" Sarge asked intent on knowing all that he can about the camp.

"Route 35 and here are some recon pictures our birds took. Study them well and give them to your men." The general said, handing Sarge some badly shot photos. The camp was near a cafÃ©, an open area; it was divided into about 5 sections, 50 prisoners in each section. The guard around it looked light, excepted three anti-tank guns and two anti-aircrafts. There was also a shed probably used for a radio, that was his main concern now.

"Here are some names and pictures of men probably in the POW camp. CP wants them out, there your secondary objective." The general added, handing Sarge about ten pictures of men.

"When do we go?"

"Midnight, get ready, were kicking this one off early." The general said, checking his watch.

"Sarge, CP wants this one of the radar. And if you succeed Hendar promised a Medal of Honor." The general said to Sage, who was getting ready to leave.

â€| 5:00 p.m. â€|

Sarge walked into the building, now used as a dorm for some of the troops. Walking into one of the bedrooms with a list. He began to read off names.

"Alright, Johnson, Medhead, Italian, Bill-."

"He's dead." Someone interrupted.

"-Harper, and Gregory." Sarge finished, looking up for the person who interrupted.

"What's for? A medal?" someone asked.

"No. You guys just volunteered."

"For what?" an impatient marine asked.

"A good cause."

"Oh shit."

— 8:50 p.m. —

The Italian was cleaning and maintaining his weapon. He and other marines sat in a living room, an old song playing. They were blacking their weapons out, making nothing shine in their kit. "In and out" Sarge said. They were all given the surveillance photos, not much help to the average soldier.

—

11. Cold Blood

Dedicated to a good friend who has passed away on January 25th, 2008. Please, if you read this keep him in your prayers. His name is Dakarai, and at 5:27, I heard he was dead.

Cold Blood

— 12:58 a.m., POW camp near Neinville —

I sat against the wall in the shed. The smell of wounds and blood was strong in the air, as 15 or so other marines were mostly sleeping in the room. Muffled grunts and curses came from the packed in mob. The dim light which was the only in the room weakened, and then cut out, only to restart a second later. The sounds of battle were off to the north, and each explosion shook the light. The doors to the shed were shut as best they could, but could not close the whole gap. Letting the unwanted cold in.

I got up, trying not to muffle my sounds, attempting to save the last pleasure the Marines in the shed had. Sleep. I came to the guard who was half asleep, I shook him awake.

"Hey, I got to go take a leak." I asked.

"Yeah whatever." He replied, trying to shoo me away to return to sleep.

The stinging cold hit me all over, being that most of my clothes had gone to the seriously wounded, and my armor confiscated. I trotted away from the camp, and stopped by a tree to piss.

"Ahh." I said as steam rose from the liquid.

I zipped up my pants and turned to leave but the sound of softened tank and assorted vehicle engines softly humming. But then it stopped, and I picked up the sound of boots cushioned by snow. I looked into the darkness, trying to make out friend or foe.

"Hey you!" a voice came from the dark, but I could not see the Marine in the 1:00 a.m. darkness.

"Yeah?" I asked, squatting down, surprised at this unexpected events.

"You part of this camp?" the Marine asked, along with one other. I could not make out the facial features but both of them had a smoke in their mouth.

"Yeah, you guys come to liberate the camp? Hell, about time. We've got about 30-." I started.

"You know this guy?" he cut me off, handing me a picture and a flashlight.

"Never saw or heard of him, who is he?" I asked, looking carefully at the mid aged Marine with a nice smile and attractive hair.

"No one, now how many are in there?"

"30 or so, most wounded."

"How many defenders?"

"I saw 35 or so, probably more."

"See any heavy emplacements?"

"Yeah, one is straight that way." I reported, pointing in the direction.

"Did you see a radio or any way of giving away our attack?" he asked.

"Yeah, I think I saw one, give me a pistol and I'll take it out."

"You've got one minute." He said, checking his watch and handing me a standard pistol.

"Marine, report this to Sarg, got it?" he said.

"On my way." The other one left us.

"Best of luck, if you're not done by the time limit, were starting the attack."

"I know the drill."

I started towards the caf  , clutching my shoulder as if hurt. My plan was simple, ask for medical treatment, scope out the place and then attempt to find and destroy the radio.

I walked into the door, grunting and cursing.

"What are you doing here? This is army personal only." The noncom instructed, looking at me with madness and disgust.

"Can you please change my bandages." I asked, trying to sound hurt

and remorseful.

"Fine, come with me, and don't do anything stupid." He warned and started walking into the caf  .

"_Don't worry about a thing  |" _I sarcastically said, skillfully unholstering a plasma grenade on his belt and hiding it in my sleeve.

We walked in; guards we passed on the way hissed and made threatening movements against me. I was laughing inside my head, looking around at all the faces of enemies about to be killed. Then I passed the radio, my target. I had to act now if I had any chance of destroying the thing. All this time, the noncom ahead of me was talking about how bad out military was, and how we would lose the war we started. Luckily, there was a mirror right in front of him, so I could clearly see a guard tailing me.

"Thanks doc." I said, taking out my pistol and firing two rounds into him. I flicked the plasma grenade behind me, which found contact on the guard's head.

He attempted to remove it, but failed. Blue blood sprayed everywhere, getting all over myself as well. I grabbed the doc's gun and started spraying the radio and its crew, destroying it.

"What the hell is happening here?" the elite who interrogated me yesterday asked.

"Sorry about this." I said, and pointed my weapon at his head and fired, killing him.

An explosion ruptured outside, the attack began. More troops started coming from other rooms of the caf  . No one even noticed me as I cut them down with their own weapon. And even if they did get outside, they were greeted by bloodthirsty soldiers.

Fevered gunfire erupted, as the Covenant were totally caught by surprise. They managed to rally by one of the heavy anti tank emplacements. It wasn't the Marines the surprised the Covenant, except the grunts of course, but the tanks and armor. How did they get there? Right under their noses they got Scorpions, Warthogs and other heavy equipment.

Never did they know the humans to be so smart and devious before. This was sort of like a revelation to the Covenant and their commanders.

"Keep the fire on em boys!" a Lieutenant shouted outside, leading the men, trying to take the last hot zone. I stepped out into onto the snowy ground. But one thing was different, I felt no cold.

The battle now has all but ended, a Scorpion landed a lucky hit on the emplacement, destroying it. All other resistance was crushed, and Marines were now helping the wounded and looking for this guy.

"Hey, hey you!" A Sergeant asked, approaching me along with his subordinate.

"Yes sir, you guys our rescue party?" I asked, with the confidence

that they were.

"No son, were here for this guy." He said, crushing my hopes.

"But what about the other POW's?" I asked, with obvious distress and anger.

"I can take 50 others."

"You need to take them all!"

"I have my orders."

"Fuck Orders."

"Look at how many vehicles I have, what do you think I could do?? Now our lines are about 50 clicks back, we'll give you ammo and enough supplies to make it out. We can take the critically wounded." He said, leaving me before I could retaliate.

â€| _2 hours latterâ€| _

The line of prisoners surrounded the vehicles like a mob, all-trying to get aboard and get away from this hell.

"Please back away from the vehicles!" a distressed Capitan pleaded. He was answered with angry shouts.

I sat at the steps of the cafÃ©, not joining the fruitless struggle.

"Your not even going to try?" a man asked, with a heavy Russian accent.

He was tall with hair the color of the snow, he was of good posture, but did not seem strong.

"Its hopeless, the best chance we have is to fall back to our lines."

"Seems like you need help."

"You want in?"

"I want in."

"Steven Arrows." I introduced, extending my hand.

"Call me Gregoriovich." He said, shaking my hand.

"What are you? Rifle man?" I asked.

"I'm multi purpose."

"Alright sounds good."

We took time to choice ammo, weapons and provisions. It was a long way back.

"How far do we have to go?" Gregoriovich asked, clearing his Sniper

rifle and checking its sights.

"Hey what are you guys going to try?" an African American and his partner asked, both with smokes logged in their mouths. The bigger of the two had a cap on his head, and a rag tag type of outfit.

"We're getting out of this hell." I replied.

"You're going to need me." He said.

"Why?"

"You're going to need a man who escaped from prison before." He bragged, a grin on his face.

"And your friend here?" I asked.

"Oh, he, he's a demo expert, comes in handy in tight places." The bigger one said.

"Y-yeah, that's m-me." He spoke, stuttering.

"Let me guess, Stut right?" I asked, giving a comical look towards Gregoriovich.

"H-how did you guess." He asked.

"Lucky guess."

"Names Walker." The bigger one said, offering no handshake.

"Arrows."

"Gregoriovich."

"So what's your plan to get out of here?" Walker asked, sitting down.

â€| _1 hour latterâ€|_

The trucks were now gone, and much of the mob had fled into the woods. Now only the sick, the wounded, or the men unwilling to run remained.

The Covenant forces rolled into camp, their convoy on the main road. No resistance remained, at least that they could see. Tanks, men and trucks were all in the group heading for the POW camp. They rolled into camp, and started to unload.

Then five explosions went off simultaneously, destroying the caf© and setting much of the convoy on fire and destroying much of the rest. The surprised and morally damaged Covenant scrambled out, believing they were up against a vastly superior foe.

As they stumbled out blindly from the smoking wrecks, well-placed sniper rounds felled even more. The grunts in the group had enough; they started to flea back up the road.

As they started up the road another defining explosion tore them to

pieces. Body parts and blue blood was all that remained in the massive hole left from the explosion.

"Damn it fall back!" an Elite ordered.

"Stut! Walker! Now!" I ordered, as the four of us converged on the survivors.

That was the nail in the coffin for them, as we took no prisoners. Even the wounded were not given the curtsy to live.

"Pleaseâ€¦ I never wanted to be in this war." A painful cry came from an Elite with a nasty chest wound.

"Neither did I." I replied, firing a round into his head.

"Damn, now that's how it's done!" Walker exclaimed, looking at the casualties they just inflicted.

"Hell of a good start." Gregoriovich added.

"Hey Stut, nice job on the explosions, how many we got left?" I asked.

"F-five s-sir." He replied, checking his backpack full of presents.

"Alright. Lets move men. Covey isn't going to be happy." I said, and we started our long journey back to friendly lines.

â€¦ _Two hours into the Journey, Support Covenant divisionâ€¦ _

"Well, well, look at what our human friends just did to our troops. May this be a lesson to everyone." The Brute said, almost laughing at the destruction of his brothers.

The elite commandos scouted the camp. The carcasses of tanks, vehicles and corpses did not deter the best the Covenant had to offer.

"Orders sir?" a subordinate asked.

"Bring all prisoners here."

"Yes sir."

All prisoners that could be found were brought to the commander. He observed them with pitiful disgust.

"You men believe that you are fighting for good. But their lies have led you to this." He started, walking along the ranks of bloody POWs.

"Weâ€¦ we will right those wrongs."

He walked once more along the ranks, and then started picking out random people, 12 in total and made them kneel down.

"If you have a god, start praying to him." He said menacingly, and

starting killing them off, with a headshot from his pistol. He finished all of them, and then turned to the others.

"You have 30 minutes to get away from here, after that, you will be hunted. For those who can survive 1 hour of being hunted will be free to go. Go now." He instructed, and the game was on.

"Stray. Kill them all." The Brute whispered into a terribly scared Jackal.

"No one will see the next light."

â€| _Somewhere in the forest near Neinvilleâ€|_

"I was born in Moscow, lived their my whole life until I was dragged into this bloody mess. Haven't looked back since." Gregoriovich said, me and him making small talk trying to pass the time. The thick forest fell silent, as most life was devoid in winter.

We'd been walking for about two hours, and we thought we were in the clear. We have heard no movement and we all thought it was over for us.

"Hunters!" Walker shouted, walking behind us with Stut. We all dove to the snowy ground, trying to find out where they were.

"Hey! Where are they?" Gregoriovich called back as silently as he could.

"See that weird tree next to the crater? Right to the left of there, I see five of them, plus support."

"Shit." I said, "Hey, Stut, set up a trip and some explosives around here."

"Got it s-sir."

"Hey, you got a bead on them Greg?"

"Yeah, should I take the shot?" he asked, eager to fell.

"No, wait for Stut."

"Walker, get ready to fall back."

A silence fell over the woods, as the unsuspecting prey would suddenly come under fire.

"Walker. Walker put your damn smoke out!" I called; believing the sensitive noses of the hunters would pick up the scent.

"A-all done b-boss." Stut reported.

"Gregoriovich, any one hit kills on the hunters?"

"Yeah, right between the slits in their eyes."

"Go for it."

The crack of the sniper rifle went off, and the distinguished white

streak followed the bullet. The call of the Covenant party followed after, and began to scan the trees.

"They see us." Gregoriovich said.

"You get the hunter?" I asked.

"Yeah, think so but two more inbound."

We all started to fire on the enemy, our empty cartages smoking as they hit the snow. The ten or so mixed Covenant forces charged forward, firing incredibly accurate shots for such a far distance.

"Grenade!" Walker shouted his warning, pulled the pin and let fly. The throw was no were close to hitting anything, only succeeding in alerting more enemies.

"Hostiles right!" Walker shouted, trying to keep fire on both sides.

"Stut! Get those bombs ready!"

"Y-yeah!"

"You want some of this!!?" Walker screamed, the adrenaline and thrill of battle running through his blood, making him stand up and firing in sweeping ark.

A green round hit him, causing a "popping" sound, as he fell to the ground.

"Stay down man!" I called over.

"What the hell are we fighting for now?" he asked, knowing that the tide of battle was going greatly against us.

"For a fucking miracle that's what!"

A hunter came out of his cover and rushed towards us, my fire not even putting a dent in it.

"Stut now!" I called, jumping out of my ditch and covering Walker as best I could.

A remote mine went off, damn, that thing had kick. It almost knocked me over Walker. Dust and big chunks of dirt and remains of the adversary fell all around us.

"Were you hit?" I asked, turning him over trying to find the wound.

"Right here, its bad." He grunted in pain.

"Sir! The cavalry arrived!" Gregoriovich shouted.

"That's right sir! We got your back!" a line through my COM came through, and the distinctive Warthog engine and machineguns add to the mix of sounds.

"Right on! Keep up the fire!" I shouted enthusiastically back.

After the Warthog showed up, the rest of the Covenant slowly started to fall back, having no weapons to combat it.

"Dead on Lieutenant! You're a godsend." I exclaimed, eager to shake my saviors hand.

"You guys with that failed attempt to liberate the POWs? We were sent with some other guys to check it out." He asked.

"You kidding, we are the POWs, the attempting was solely for the high rankers, not us low rollers."

"All right, we got to get out of here." The Lieutenant said, aware of the approaching doom.

We loaded Walker onto the Warthog and started rolling off, eager to put miles between us and the menaces approaching behind.

From then on out, there was no action, but the four remaining mines did get tripped and exploded. But we were only about 1 mille out so there was no rush.

â€|_Back at campâ€|_

"Damn fine work out there Marines, earned yourself a medal you did." The Lieutenant stressed.

"Yeah, sounds good." I replied, not really caring.

"Well comrade, this looks like the end." Gregoriovich said, giving me a handshake.

"See you sometime after the war."

"Hey you guys, what about me?" Walker asked, being carried away by a stretcher.

"Hey, catch you latter also, don't work to hard."

"Don't worry." He replied, a big smile on his face.

"S-see you boss." The stuttering from Stut came.

"Yeah, you did good."

I never saw those men again, they were good people though. We all wanted to get out, that was our motivation and soul driver in that crazy operation we pulled. All POWs that stayed behind were killed, half the bodies were found in the forest.

But what of the main operation? They were cut off by an elite group of Covenant forces, cut most of them down. 98 in fact, died for the life of one person, who ended up dieing in the ER after being hit by shrapnel. Some got out though, the only plus sign to that damn messâ€|

Present Day Heretic HQ

The Heretic leaders sat there, in a round circle in the same dark room which the high one inhabited for months on end. Only a small torch in the middle of the group gave off light.

"Are the repairs complete?" the high one asked, still keeping the tradition to never show his face. All that was known about his face was his gleaming red eyes.

"Yes my lord, all damage was repaired." The underling reported, bowing as low as he could.

"Yes? What caused the damage?" the calm high one asked.

"We? we expected a traitor."

The room fell silent, no one dared to speak. An air of dread fell over the room, no one stirred. The real traitor, commander Bendat, sat there silently, laughing loudly in his head. The high one leaned over, so close to one general that he could feel the hot breath on his face.

"Let's hope there isn't one." The high one whispered, but everyone heard.

New York, Steven's dorm

I lay on the bed, lazily looking at the smoke that came from his cigar. Right now I was living off the government until they got me a spot in collage.

Music started in the other room, very loud. I got up, and walked over to the other room. Stride stood there, watching the radio with wide eyes, gripping his plasma sword.

"Don't worry, it's not hostile." I joked.

It was met by an unimpressed and tired face.

"Hear that?" I asked, snapping my fingers to the beat.

"What?" he asked still agitated.

"Can't you hear that? The beat of the song." I asked.

"Is this what you humans do in your free time?" he cynically asked, walking out the room.

"Come on man, this is important stuff!" I insisted, turning off the radio and following after him.

"You didn't have music back in your home world?" I asked with amazement.

"We didn't do irrelevant things." He answered, sitting down on the couch. It sagged under the weight of his armor, which he never took off. At least the time he spent in my dorm.

"No wonder you guys lost the war." I said, and by doing so, stirred up a hornets' nest.

"We never lost the war; our great Prophets simply decided that enough lives were lost fighting the infidel." He replied, burning anger fueled by faith and furry.

"Billions of advanced alien soldiers losing to a few million Earth soldiers?" I asked.

"We did need to purify this galaxy. Kill all non-believers." He zealously said an attitude not uncommon in Elites. He was blinded of all those propaganda statements and the teachings of the "Holy" prophets.

"So this wars point was to just feed the egos of your insane prophets?" I countered.

"I was saying-."

"What? That you needed to start a war that killed Trillions?"

"We needed to purify this galaxy!"

"Godâ€¦ I would have loved to meet you on the field of battle, given a good chance to kill you."

"I would enjoy the same."

Our eyes linked, as tension filled the room and were waiting for the other to pull his weapon. The moment brought back the hatred the two sides still had against each other. All that was needed to condemn more billions to death was a act of hatred. My disliking of the Elite was outweighed by the thought of my brothers lost in the flames of war. I did not want others to suffer what I did.

A knock at the door ended the hostilitiesâ€¦ for a moment at least. I promised myself that if a war ever happened again, and the Humans and Covies were somehow allies. Stride would be the first KIA'ed by "friendly fire."

"I'll get it." I said my voice devoid of all emotions. Stride seemed to also back down.

I went to the door, listening to the slightest footsteps behind me, still clutching my service pistol. I opened the door; half expected a officer to give me some crazy lecture. But at my door, was a 20 year old American raw recruit. His hair was short and black, finely kept. His uniform was completely spot free; he stood a little shorter than me. His brown eyes matched the bag he hauled behind him.

"Can I help you private?" I asked, easing of my pistol.

"It's an honor to meet a surviving trooper from the Covenant wars! It really is an honor." He said, as if I were a superstar.

"Any reason you're here?" I asked.

"I am making acquaintances with my dorm mates."

"Right? What's your name?" I asked.

"Wheaton, sir. And my specialty is Communication skills. I speak 6 languages, Mandarin, French, German, Spanish, Advent (Covenant language) and Japanese."

"Amazing." I bluntly said, "Shouldn't you report to your dorm?" I asked, trying to get rid of him.

"Who's this?" Stride came up behind me, startling me by his fleet of foot.

"A new dorm person." I replied.

The new guy shook Stride's hand and started talking to him in an alien tongue. Stride seemed intrigued by the human being able to speak his same tongue. The phone rang in the "kitchen", and I went to answer.

"Steven here." I preemptively said into the phone.

"Steven, this is Dan." The cheery voice from the recognizable accent.

"Hey man, how's things holding up with you?" I asked, wiping my forehead.

"Good, all good. But the real reason I called. The Army vs. Navy football game is coming up. And I hear that they have an open tryout on Friday. You should check it out." Dan reported, expecting I'd like the news.

It was pleasing news indeed; I played football much of my life, always hoping to get a chance to play in a big game.

"Sounds, good I'll be there. You playing?" I asked, trying to curve my anxiety.

"Not my type of game, I hear the Italian and some others are in."

"Thanks see you." I said, hanging up. I felt overjoyed; I waited for a chance like this almost all my life. I jumped up and hit the ceiling with my hands.

â€¦ _Pentagon..._

The room filled with chatter as both Covenant and Human military personnel sat, waiting impatiently. They sat divided, Covenant on the right, and Humans on the left. Quite like the real thing. But they did not know that if they stood divided, they would both fall.

A hush came over the crowd as the president walked in. The Human generals rose up and saluted, the Covenant didn't give such a luxury. The Covenant leader then came in, and the entire Covenant rose.

The president had fading grey hair, and the war had a drastic affect on his age. His eyes looked always tiered, but this only masked the brilliant mind he had. He alone held the Spartan project together, even

amongst huge disapproval amongst the staff. His name is Gorge. Gorge Walker. And he is the 189th president to take office.

"It's an honor to meet you." The president said, shaking the hand of a former enemy.

He came up close to the Elites ear and whispered, "I can never forgive you for what you've done to us. I would like nothing better than to see you burn."

"I did not come here to be scolded by an old fool." He responded with growling hostility.

"Nor did I. Truth isâ€¦ we need your helpâ€¦"

—...—

13. Chapter 13

â€¦ _Pentagonâ€¦_

"Gentleman!" The president started, clearing his mouth before he began, speaking in a commanding voice. "You are all here for a very important reason."

"Thank you for all making it on such a short notice. But this is of utmost urgency." The lights blacked out, and a large TV came down. It showed a large row of pictures. He enlarged one, which was a picture of a ideal city.

"This is New Hope, I'm sure you know where that all is" the president joked, making fun of the huge losses sustained by the Covenant in the attempt to take the city.

"We did not come here to be humiliated!" An angry alien general called, and other voices joined the uproar.

"Please gentlemen, let me finish." The president calmly said, noting that his humor hit a sensitive note.

"This is a picture from one week ago. See the ideal conditions it is in. Now, here are pictures from five hours ago." The president said, presenting a picture of nothing but rubble.

The drama and seriousness of this meeting was realized, as all fell quite in shock. The city was all gone, all that remained was a pile of burning carcass.

"This has to be the Covenant!" a general accused with burning anger.

"Silence. This is not the Covenant." The president started, "We were all at that conclusion when we saw these pictures. But I was unwilling to come to that which could lead to the destruction of

billions."

"If you look closely at this shell hole here. You see this pattern. It is quite distinct and the greenish glow it gives off. Now, I figured that this was an opportunity to check if this was the Covenant or not." He said, stopping to clear his breath.

"We hacked into the Covenant network and crossed referenced that with all new or old laser weapons they had. None matched." He said mischievously.

"That's imposable! Our security is much more advanced than yours!" the surprised Covenant leader countered, unable to accepted that they were beaten by the meat bags.

"I can tell you with 100 certainty that in your bed room you have a red bed, three pictures, five auto machineguns and three guards at the door 24 hours a day. They interval every 23 hours and 35 minutes. You also read intelligence memos on your desk at seven every day with your dinner. Convinced?" he said, raising his eyebrow.

The Covenant slumped back down. He now knew the extent of which these meat bags had on his security.

"Now only if this weapon is more secret then your favorite yo mama jokes, we are sure that this is right."

"Damnnnâ€|" a low mumble from the crowed came in awe.

"So, the next decision is yours. Will you join our new coalition?"

â€|

End
file.